



Head Office: Dr Steve Rogers, Chief Executive Officer, CRC LEME, PO Box 1130, Bentley WA 6102
ARRC, 26 Dick Perry Avenue, Kensington WA 6151
Phone: 08 6436 8695 Fax: 08 6436 8560 Email: crclleme-hq@csiro.au
www: <http://crclleme.org.au>

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Open Letter from Mr George Savell, Chair CRC LEME Board

FUTURE OF REGOLITH GEOSCIENCE R&D AND INNOVATION IN AUSTRALIA - END USER PRIORITIES

I am writing to you as Chairman of the Cooperative Research Centre for Landscape Environments and Mineral Exploration (CRC LEME) an unincorporated joint venture established and funded under the Australian Government's Cooperative Research Centres Program. Full details of the CRC, its research programs and outputs can be found on our Web Site at : <http://crclleme.org.au>.

Regolith science is a relatively emerging science which CRC LEME 1 and 2 have pursued in a coordinated way for some 10 years. Only now are solutions becoming available which can be applied to both mineral search and natural resource management.

The CRC will cease to exist on 30 June 2008. Fully focused regolith science programs will cease on that event. In the opinion of many, regolith science is not yet embedded to a point where it can be left to develop of its own volition.

During 2006 two events focused attention on the need to review what is required for the continuation of regolith research beyond CRC LEME.

- In July 2006 the independent Fifth Year Review Panel noted that the Minerals Advisory Council which advises the Board was concerned at diminishing numbers of CRCs serving the Minerals industry and strongly recommended the Board evaluate all means of redressing this problem.
- The Independent Review then drew attention to the fact that we are nowhere near reaching definitive answers to improved exploration through cover. Nor indeed are we close to finding final solutions to salinity management.

Both of these issues are heavily dependent on continuing focused regolith research.

As a result the Governing Board of the CRC has appointed a Special Task Force chaired by our CEO, Dr Steve Rogers, to critically examine the end-user requirements for future regolith geoscience research, post LEME 2.

This will also determine if and what sort of future organisation may be needed to pursue regolith science.

We are seeking input from existing and potential end-users of regolith research to determine the level of demand, future strategies and focus for regolith work. We would very much

welcome your input to this exercise. Please feel free to contact Dr Steve Rogers by phone, fax or email as your input is vital in determining this matter.

Thank you for your consideration. We look forward to your response and input which would be appreciated by the end of January 2007.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "George Savell".

George Savell
Chair CRC LEME Board

Please turn over for background information

Background information - CRC LEME 1 and 2

CRC LEME 1 (Cooperative Research Centre for Landscape **Evolution** and Mineral Exploration) the precursor to CRC LEME 2, operated from June 1995 to June 2001 and focussed its regolith geoscience efforts on the needs of Australian mineral explorers.

CRC LEME 2 commenced in July 2001 with a mission to create breakthroughs in mineral exploration and environmental management through generating and applying new knowledge of the regolith. In doing so, it is developing LEME and its Core Participants into global leaders in regolith research and its application to mineral exploration and natural resources management. The key objectives of the CRC are to:

- Provide the mineral industry with world-leading capabilities leading to breakthroughs in exploration in Australia's extensive areas of cover.
- Provide essential multi-disciplinary knowledge of Australia's regolith environments, and ensure that it is transferred into practice in the minerals industry and environmental management.
- Provide high quality, geoscience-based education for those entering the minerals industry, and environmental realms